Soad Muhammad

Come to

The Ultimate Success

Secrets of the real-life for those who lived as fleeting guests

Translated By:
Muhammad Mustafa Al Saket

البرنامج الوطني لدار الكتب المصرية

الفهرسة أثناء النشر (بطاقة فهرسة)

إعداد الهيئة العامة لدار الكتب والوثائق القومية (إدارة الشئون الفنية)

محمد، سعاد.

حي على الفلاح: COME TO THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS/

سعاد محمد؛ الترجمة إلى الإنجليزية محمد مصطفى الساكت. - القاهرة: دار

زحمة كتاب للتوزيع والنشر، ٢٠٢٠ .

ص؛ سم -

تدمك 978-977-835-125-5

رقم الإيداع/ 14362 /2019 التاريخ: 02/07/2020

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The Book's Name: COME TO THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS

The Arabic text was authored by

Soad Muhammad

The original book was translated into the English Language by

Muhammad Mustafa Al Saket

Number of Pages: 209

Seventh Edition: First English Edition

Registration Number: 2019/ 14362

ISBN: 978-977-835-125-5

Publisher: Dar **Zahmet Kotab** for publishing and distribution

١٥ ش السباق – مول المريلاند – مصر الجديدة – مصر

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Ultimate Success

Dawn is to become a day. It is a time that marks the beginning of twirling before sunrise. It is a line between the white thread and the black thread of the dawn. Currently, the Mu′azzin[1] calls Salat (Prayer), saying: *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is the Greatest).

The Muslims take the initiative to perform the Dawn prayer[2], whether in house or Mosque[3].

Call by Call and Prayer by Prayer; Sweet words fill our ears and hearts with delight. Lo! Verily Allah calls us, by the Mu′azzin, to stand up to perform a prayer, besides, He

[1] The Mu'azzin (Arabic: المؤذّن) a person calls to prayers saying a certain word.

[2] The Dawn prayer (Arabic: صلاة الفجر) in the Arabic language is pronounced *Salat ul-Fajr*.

[3] Mosque (Arabic: المسجد) in the Arabic language is pronounced *Masjid*.

always urges to do it. For us, we respond to the prayer call; we do Wudu′ (Ablution) to clean our bodies and to be free from all the worldly things.

Well, did anyone ever wonder what about the Call of Prayer? Was it a revelation? Or was it an order from God?

In the early of Islam, the Muslims were praying without Adhan[1]. Nevertheless, when the matter of the Call proclamation was tough upon the Muslims, they discussed this problem regarding the Call for Prayer. Some of them said: *Let us use a bell-like the Christians do*; others said: *Let us use a horn as the Jews have*. Nevertheless, ‘Umar, son of Al-Khattab ﷺ[2] was the first one to suggest that a man should

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[1] Adhan (Arabic: آذان) The Call or summons to congregational prayers proclaimed.
[2] ﷺ means in the English language means *May Allah be pleased with him*.

call the people for the prayer; so, the Messenger of Allah Muhammad ﷺ agreed with him, so the Messenger of Allah said: «*O, Bilal, get up and give the Call to Prayer.* »

One night

‘Abdullah, son of Zayd, had a dream. He dreamed that a man wearing two green garments, carrying a bell. Did he say to him: *O, man, will sell the signal?* A man replied: *What will you do with it?* The companion of the Messenger of Allah, ‘Abdullah, son of Zayd, said: *I shall call the people for the prayers*. A man said: *Shall I not tell you of something better than that?* He said: *What is it?* A man replied: *Say:*

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar: (Allah is the Greatest. Allah is the Greatest);

Ashhadu An La Ilaha Illa Allah, Ashhadu An La Ilaha Illa Allah: (I testify that there is no truly worshipped God but Allah, I testify that there is no truly worshipped God but Allah);

Ashhadu Anna Muhammadan Rasulullah, Ashhadu Anna Muhammadan Rasulullah: (I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah);

Hayy' Ala As-Salat, Hayy' Ala As-Salat: (Come to the Prayer, Come to the prayer);

Hayy' Ala Al-Falah, Hayy' Ala Al-Falah: (Come to Ultimate Success, Come to Ultimate Success);

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar: (Allah is the Greatest. Allah is the Greatest);

La Ilaha Illa Allah: (There is no truly worshipped God but Allah).

'Abdullah, son of Zayd, went out towards the Messenger of Allah, *peace, and blessings of Allah be upon him*, then told him what he had seen. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ

said: «*Your companion has had a dream. Go out with Bilal to the Masjid, then teach it to him, for he has a beautiful voice than you*». When Bilal ﵁ was calling the Muslims for the prayer, 'Umar, son of Al-Khattab ﵁ said: *O, Messenger of Allah, I saw the same dream as him*. Then, the Messenger of Allah said: «*Lillahi Al-Hamd*» *(All praise to be Allah)*[1].

I cannot bear to ignore this great Call. The words of the Call for the prayer please the heart of mine, five times daily. It is a real Godsend for mine. So, I always do repeat these words, during I hear them.

Come to Ultimate Success

The body of mine always quivers if I hear the word of Ultimate Success. Mine does feel that Allah urges mine to achieve the meaning of Ultimate Success and Salvation.

[1] Reference: Sunnan Son of Majah 698, The Book of Adhan and the Sunnah Regarding it, Chapter: How the Adhan Began.

Well, what is on mind about Ultimate Success?

Ultimate success, linguistically, in the Arabic language, means *Salvation*, *Righteousness*, and *Honesty*. Nevertheless, do human beings realise the meaning of Ultimate Success and Salvation?

Perhaps somebody realises the meaning of Ultimate Success according to somebody's concept using all own individual methods, which suits a person's own life. So, somebody considers that what somebody achieved is the desired Ultimate Success, whether it agrees to the Islamic Law or not.

Nevertheless, another makes a person's deeds, objectives, wishes, and life matters under Islamic Law. This other person will achieve that after doing a person's utmost.

I feel that there is a strong relationship between the status of high spiritual, which a person achieves, and the state of Ultimate Success in life and afterlife, but I do believe that. For the life of mine, I have had several stories like no other. These stories prove that simple people in life. I do not mean poor people or needy, Allah forbids, but I mean those who live a simple life, not a complicated life, and those who live as though a wayfarer. These people, indeed, reach Ultimate Success!

So, I am interested in narrating some of the real-life stories that I had attended with them. Lo! Verily there are real people. Their stories are real-life stories. Every story carries within it one of the meanings of Ultimate Success.

The First Story

1

She Looked Like Umm Kulthum!

A man has neediness, then do as he may,

A man will be bestowed by Godsend.

When we struggle and insist on being patient, we shall get the ultimate success in life and the afterlife.

TABLIYYAH is a low round Egyptian table made of rough wood used mainly in the countryside and by the poor as a dining table. The elder sister of mine and I were taking seats to eat Kishk; it is a dish of a creamy consistency based on chicken stock thickened with milk or yoghurt and flour. It is an Egyptian food. I think the people of Upper Egypt who invented. A lady from Upper Egypt was living with us at the same real estate. Her flat was on the first floor[1] of the real estate.

The elder sister of mine and I were being gluttonous when ***Umm Hamdiyyah*** (Mother Hamdiyyah) had to feed us. We loved her food so much. She was a kind-hearted,

[1] According to the American English is *the second floor*, but in the British English is *the first floor*.

superior woman; besides, she did look like ***Umm Kulthum***[1]. She did like to call her ***Mum Hamdiyyah*** because she did not have kids. She was like our mother, and we were like her kids.

I do remember so well a prayer rug that she was putting it upon the land in the guestroom. It became a shabby one because of the many prostrations[2]. Besides, a white veil that she was wearing to perform the prayers. It always did throw on the sofa.

Usta[3] ***Muhammad***, her husband, was kind-hearted like his spouse. He was charming, sweet, funny, and

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1 Umm Kulthum (1898: 1975) was an Egyptian singer and songwriter. She was given the honorific title Star of the East, pronounced in the Roman Transliteration *Kawkab Al-Sharq*.

2 Prostration (Arabic: سجود), pronounced in the Roman Transliteration *Sujud*, or *Sajdah*.

3 Usta (Arabic: أُسطى), it is an Egyptian local and slang word. It is a title of, and form of address or reference to, one who has undergone

humorous. When we were kids, we used to call him ***Papa Al-Usta***[1].

Their flat was clam and clean. The people of real estate were gathering in ***Papa Al-Usta's*** unit during their watching TV. They were used to drinking tea and coffee while watching a television series at 07:30 P.M. It was showing before the 09:00 P.M. of the news broadcasting.

In the early 1980s, the people of real estate had no colour television. So, they were gathering in the flat of ***Usta Muhammad***. Naturally, it was an ordinary matter for average-income-families at that time.

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training or apprenticeship in a craft or profession regarded as skilled, e.g., supervisor of a small workshop, driver, qualified machine operative, and so on.

[1] Papa Al-Usta (Arabic: بابا الأُسطى), it is the Roman Transliteration of Egyptian slang word. The Literal Translation is A Man-skilled in his work.

Mum Hamdiyyah did not feel either objection or weariness to welcome the people of real estate. She loved them so much.

The elder sister of mine and I were slipping into, sometimes, their flat for fun and games with them. Day-to-day life was straightforward. Their presence did not carry many details, but we were treated with great Kindness and politeness. They had a high optimism, even though they did not have kids at all. So, they faced their neediness by making their flat the place that the kids of the people of real estate to come and have fun. A thing of beauty is a joy forever! The elder sister of mine and I considered that thing of beauty for them.

Days and years passed, then our family moved into a new house. It was not an easy thing; I always fond of a

simple life. We did visit them infrequently, so we did not know a lot about them.

Well, it was too bad that ***Papa Al-Usta*** passed away! The real estate owner asked ***Mum Hamdiyyah*** to replace her flat with another on the ground floor; the elder son of the real estate's owner intended to marry. He did not have much money to rent a flat!

The ground floor was tiny. It consisted of one room and a tightness hall; it hardly was enough, only one sofa and one table for eating. When I knew that, I felt so sorry for her. So I rushed off to her to urge her to decline. I emphasised our needy to it and the kids of the people of real estate. We felt it like our house.

I did not realise that she would take her shabby prayer rug, which I used to sit upon it! I could not bear to miss the

view of her veil that it was throwing on the sofa! It was so hard for me than the last. Nevertheless, she shocked me by her saying:

The husband of mine passed away! Here, I did not have relatives; all relatives of mine live in Upper Egypt. The owners of real estate are like relatives of mine. They, indeed, take care of me. Be calm! Make sure that I am satisfied; it is a pleasant life for me.

Despite not being able to be convinced of what happened, I visited her repeatedly. After that, with time, I realised her wisdom.

Her husband's pension was minimal, like that, I thought. Despite that, if you entered her new flat, you would eat many gourmet foods. Her food could go along away!

She saved some money with her neighbour for doing ‘Umrah[1]. By the grace of Allah, she went to perform ‘Umrah in the month of Ramadan. Then, she stayed there until the date of Pilgrimage; it is the fifth pillar of Islam. She did perform Pilgrimage.

After her coming back from Makkah, she divided her money into two halves. The first half was for her, and the second was for her nephews. Her brother passed away in Upper Egypt. So, she got the elder sister of mine to send the second half on behalf of her. The elder sister of mine was sending that money each month through the post-office. However, ***Mum Hamdiyyah*** was upset if the elder sister of mine failed to do that mission.

[1] ‘Umrah (Arabic: عُمرة) a lesser pilgrimage, or a visitation to the House of Allah (Ka‘bah) in Makkah.

What is, in your opinion, about ***Mum Hamdiyyah***? Did she realise the meaning of Ultimate Success?

Did she believe in it?

Well, that was clear by her deeds, even though she was illiterate.

Somebody of her neighbours gave a piece of advice for her to save some money if she became old-age, then she would be able to keep it for a rainy day. She replied:

SAVE IT FOR A RAINY DAY. ALLAH FORBIDS. I SHALL DO HANDOUT; ALLAH WILL PROTECT ME.

I do remember her words. Verily, terms laid in her heart of hearts!

Verily, that was the right choice of a path of ultimate success. I never forget these words at all.

Eight years ago, in the age of the seventh year, after her fasting the month of Ramadan and fasting six days of the month of Shawwal, she vomited some of the blood. It was virus C, the damned disease, which caused the death of most of that generation!

Symptoms of the disease never showed up. ***Mum Hamdiyyah*** felt ill in the last two days of the previous phase of the illness. So, she went to the physician. It was too bad to tell her that she nearly passed away.

The physician did wonder how she did not suffer like the rest of the patients? In her last days, she was praying, fasting, and regularly attending lessons of the Islamic sciences in the Masjid like the young people. That was due to her saying that she believed in:

Save it for a rainy day. Allah forbids. I shall do handout; Allah will protect me.

It was the ultimate success that she had chosen. She believed in and insisted upon it, even though some people disliked what she thought.

However, in the end, she answered the prayer call:

Come to Ultimate Success!

Consequently, she got the ultimate success in her life and afterlife.

The Second Story

2

A Naïve Girl,

But Smart and Beautiful

Sometimes, Santa cannot bring you what you ask for,
However, a drowning man will clutch at straws.
We must hold fast by the Rope, which Allah stretches out for you.
It is the Omnipotence of Allah that we must hold fast!

ONCE upon a time, there was a doll face, mild-mannered, and beautiful girl. She was the daughter of the owner of real estate. The family of mine and I were living in it. Despite her young age, she took responsibility for herself. I do remember her when she was standing in a grocery shop under the estate.

She had no more than eight years, but she had an awareness of what was around her. Also, she starred wide eyes of what under her care in a grocery shop.

One day, I was two years younger than her. After that, I asked her:

Why did you not take from sweets?

She replied:

No, it is unlawful, but if the mother of mine will give me.

At that time, I named her A naïve Girl!

I had no idea that Mona realised what she said and did; she was a young girl but had a strong belief in her thoughts. She had undisputed facts, which would lead her to the desired ultimate success.

I do remember those beautiful days in the month of Ramadan, especially after the Afternoon prayer[1]. Besides, the people of the popular quarters were doing embellishment for the streets and coffee bars. They were ready to break their fasting after hearing Ramadan Cannon[2].

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[1] The Afternoon prayer (Arabic: صلاة العصر), pronounced in the Roman Transliteration *Salat ul-'Asr*.

[2] It was to indicate the exact timing for the sunset and the fast-breaking.

The glassy food cart of uncle Hasan was filled with dishes of blancmange and rice pudding. The elder sister of mine and I passionately loved to buy from him before the Sunset prayer; the plates were hot and tasty.

At the time, I was six years old. I had no idea of the meaning of fasting the month of Ramadan. It was a shame to eat! She had a belief in it. In respect to her, it was unlawful to eat before the Call of the Sunset prayer! Mona fasted while she was eight years old.

Why do not you eat with us, Mona? I asked.

It is unlawful! How can I eat, while others fast? It is a shame to do that. Mona replied.

She was leaving us to go to her house. Lo! Verily, she realised the meaning of the ultimate success at that time. Perhaps, it was the beginning for her.

Later, we moved into our new house, and then we had no news of her since. By chance, I saw her while she was going to the Masjid to perform the Tarawih prayer[1]. She was 18 years old at that time.

I asked Mona:

What is the Tarawih prayer? What good is it?

She replied in simple words:

It is a prayer that will feel you be happy. You will not think that only when you perform it at the Masjid.

That was the beginning of mine with the Tarawih prayer. Since that time, I am used to performing it at the Masjid each month of Ramadan. After ***Mona's*** words, I

[1] The Tarawih prayer (Arabic: صلاة التراويح). This prayer is a special characteristic of the month of Ramadan. This follows the Evening ('Isha') prayer, which consists of eight to twenty (Rak'ahs) offered two by two.

always do search for the meaning of happiness. Every year, I try to urge people I know to go to the Masjid for performing the Tarawih prayer. I hope that our Lord, Allah, grants us the meaning of happiness. We always seek spiritual growth.

Mona got married after a few years of her mother's death. I attended her wedding party in her new house; I did congratulate her. Subsequently, I knew that she adored and featherbedded her husband. In general, ***Mona*** dedicated her life to her husband to curry the husband's favour.

When I met her by chance, at that time, she was in pink. Light of her eyes filled with delight, funny, and adoration. She was a jewel among women!

Years had passed, but she did not a baby! ***Mona*** went to the doctor over and again over. The doctor told her that she had a medical problem, which prevented to give birth.

He guided her to do two surgical operations. She did, but she reached a dead-end in her attempts to find a medical solution. Unfortunately, the two surgical procedures were unsuccessful. So, she decided to go to Makkah to perform ‘Umrah; she wanted to do ablution by the Well of Zamzam. It is sacred water for the Muslims.

Her fact was like that, but she got a bad feeling that her husband would desire to marry another woman to beget a baby. For that, who would inherit her husband’s trading? Who would inherit her husband’s money?

Mona had travelled to the Holy House. While she was there, she clutched at curtains of the Kaʿbah. She begged to the Almighty Allah; **He is only the Sustainer**[1].

[1] The Sustainer (Arabic: الرَّزَّاق), pronounced in the Roman Transliteration: *Ar-Razzaq*.

Were it not for tears, and the ribs would have burnt. Sure, Mona cried her eyes out when she begged to Almighty Allah. She felt to remain satisfied. And then, she came back to Cairo, and she was in excellent condition.

Two months later, she became pregnant! Lo! Verily, she had a strong belief in Allah; He would give unto her so that she would be content.

The Lord, Allah, indeed, is the Sustainer. It is one of the secrets of the ultimate success, in which a few people realise its meaning.

Her story did not end yet. The joy of the heart makes a face merry! No one could describe her great pleasure at that time.

But,

Three years later, she knew that her husband did not content with his daughter; he would marry to beget a boy. It was his final decision. However, Mona did not care about what he would do because she was very grateful to Allah Almighty. He is only the Sustainer. She always contented whenever her daughter called her (O My Mother!), or hugged her.

After I met her, and she narrated what her husband would do, I said:

Why do you not cry, Mona? Why do not you scream? Your story is so painful than the last! I cry for you!

Nevertheless, she smiled and wiped out the tears of mine by her smooth hands, saying to me:

Do not cry, please! I am fully satisfied with the beautiful daughter of mine. Do not forget that Allah Almighty answered the

supplication of mine. Paying attention should be to the daughter of mine.

I asked her:

Will you ask him for a divorce?

Mona answered:

I never do that! He, indeed, loves me so much and treats me with real Kindness. Besides, I, indeed, adore him, and he is the father of the daughter of mine. Do not worry, a friend of mine! I shall be adjusted to the new life.

I did nothing, but I asked Allah Almighty to make her patient.

Nevertheless, her husband, indeed, married a girl that was younger than ***Mona***. The comparison between Mona and the new bride was very painful.

One day, I visited her, but what a pity! She could not have her cake and eat it too! Her face was the index of her heart. Her face was pale and dim eyes: no happiness, but only a broken heart.

Her life was callous. She had difficult challenges; it was not easy to get happiness. Her supplications and invocation to Almighty God were the only way to be patient, so her belief in Almighty God, the Gracious[1] very strong.

After a while, ***Mona*** and her husband had decided to travel to Makkah for performing Pilgrimage. That was the only path to clutch at curtains of the Ka'bah. She held fast by the Rope, which Almighty Allah stretched out for her. So, none could reach the same level of her spiritual growth.

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[1] The Gracious: (Arabic: اللطيف), pronounced in the Roman Transliteration *Al-Latif*. It means the Subtle One, Gracious, the One who is kind to His creatures and endows upon them.

She came back to Cairo to become more contented and to have more relaxed. Her mother-in-law did congratulate her husband after their coming back immediately; his second spouse was pregnant. All of them were waiting for a new baby; they were happy. Nevertheless, she was in a high level of spiritual growth. Her faith led her to become more contented.

Only three months passed, it was the glad tidings! She, indeed, became pregnant. Recite the two verses of the Glorious Qur'an: ﴿*Unto Allah belongeth the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He createth what He will. He bestoweth female (offspring) upon whom He will, and bestoweth male (offspring) upon whom He will* ۝ *Or He mingleth them, males, and females, and He*

maketh barren whom He will. Lo! He is Knower, Powerful ﴾[1]

[Surat Ash-Shurah: 49, 50].

Lo! Verily, Almighty Allah is the Sustainer, the Bestower. The second spouse gave birth to a beautiful and cute girl. Subsequently, after four months, ***Mona*** gave birth to the desired boy that her husband wished.

Allah bestowed her what she always was wishing, that was on the strength of her conviction and belief. She did not get bored, either seeking Forgiveness or supplications. Besides, she did not get tired to hold fast by the Rope of Allah. That was the path of the ultimate success of her.

[1] The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an, Translated into the English Language, By Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

So, if you want to reach the ultimate success, you will get it in life before the afterlife, if you should take all the necessary steps. In other words, physical efforts, intellectual reasoning, seeking advice, and even supplication to Allah.

The Third Story

3

Taaqah of the Mosque

At First Sight;

Then, Love;

Then, Meeting.

It is a long struggle for remaining love.

AT the work of mine, I had seen ***Duha***, a friend of mine, who was standing so absentminded. I did not know why did she do that most of the time?

I wonder what her matter was?

In the beginning, the dealing of mine with her did not go right. Nevertheless, I kept the eye of mine on her. Day after day, I felt comfortable during the deep-dealing of mine with her. I was confident that she had something that I did not know.

One day, the curiosity of mine led to getting into a conversation with her. I told her what I had done before. I told her that I feel not comfortable to deal with her. At that time, I should have apologised for that feeling. I, indeed, did.

I wondered that she welcomed me to get into a conversation with me! I turned over a new leaf. She just seemed like she wanted to reveal vent to her secrets.

The talking of mine made her reduced to tears. I tried to calm her down. Perhaps, that was because of the death of her father. He passed away three months ago, at that time. I thought that she missed her father.

Duha took out a photograph of her father from her wallet, kissed it, and hugged saying to me:

Do you see this man? He is the father of mine, the Mercy of Allah may be upon him, and rarely to find a man looks like him. The father of mine was an extraordinary man, so you cannot imagine what I shall tell you about him.

I asked her to stay away from my work colleagues; then, the direction of mine was towards the kitchen to

prepare two-cup of tea. We stayed away from the noise to start to tell me about her father, ***Sayed***. She said:

When the father of mine, ***Sayed****, was a young man, he used to the upkeep of the Mosque. He did it, free of charge; he was doing it for Allah's sake, even though he did not perform the prayers.*

One day during the upkeep of the Mosque, he saw a girl was sitting on the roof of her house. A smiling girl was looking at the Mosque, closely. At first sight, ***Sayed*** *thought that a girl was looking at him. When he waved her, he did make sure that she was looking at the Mosque.*

After that, he hurried to the Sheikh of the Mosque to ask him about her.

Sheikh of the Mosque answered:

She is a Christian girl; she loves to listen to the prayer call as well as to see the Muslims when they pray.

Duha stopped for a short time, then continued to tell me further details about her parents:

A Christian girl's mother, if she gave birth to a baby, her baby passed away. She could only go to a mountebank for advisory. A mountebank told her that she could go to Taaqah of the Mosque if she gave birth again.

The Egyptian culture tells us what Taaqah of the Mosque is[1]. It was a long window and thin within a wall of the Masjid (Mosque) or a division of the farmer's house in rural areas in Egypt. The people of the Egyptian rural had a thought that it had a spiritual power of Almighty God.

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[1] It is pronounced in the Roman Transliteration:
Taaqat ul-Jame' (Arabic: طاقة الجامع).

She, indeed, hurried to her Muslim neighbour, when she had given birth to her baby. Her Muslim neighbour took a baby to pass in front of Taaqat ul-Jame' seven times. Self-preservation is the first Law of nature. A mountebank ordered a Christian girl's mother to keep her baby out of the public eyes. A Christian mother did utterly. Also, she did not register the birth of her daughter; she thought that she would preserve her daughter to die.

Since the beginning of time, the Destiny of Almighty Allah has decided that the daughter of a Christian mother would stay alive. When she was 16 years old, she began to look at the congregations praying at the Masjid. ***Sayed*** adored that girl, so he was keeping to go to the Masjid for upkeep and seeing his darling girl. The Christian girl noted that; she fell in love with him shyly.

Despite the difference between their religions, he decided to marry her. They had encountered difficulties. After a long struggle, they could get married. The matter of their marriage never was easy!

Each family of them decided to stay away; they began their life on their own.

One day, his spouse asked him to teach her how she performs the Muslim prayers, but Sayed silenced too long. He was wavering, asking himself:

How do I teach her? I cannot; I do not pray.

His spouse's question made him reduced to tears, asking himself again:

What a pity. I, indeed, do not know to pray correctly. What will I do? I am in trouble; I do not know much of the religion of mine.

Immediately, he decided to turn over a new leaf. Somebody loses nothing who loses, not Allah. So, he asked her to be ready to go to the nearest Masjid. His spouse was excited. Indeed, they went to the nearest Masjid to ask its Sheikh to teach them how to pray.

YEAR BY YEAR,

They learnt how to practise the rites of the religion of Islam and recited the Glorious Qur'an by their hearts. Not only that, but they did teach the Qur'an to their five kids, besides teaching them how to practise the Islamic religion. After that, ***Sayed*** learnt, in deeply Fiqh[1], besides his trading.

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[1] Fiqh (Arabic: الفقه) (English: Islamic Jurisprudence) is described as the human understanding of the Shari'ah, that is human understanding

Later, he was known ***Sheikh Sayed*** because he taught many people how to practise correctly.

Duha had finished speaking about her parents. Then, she smiled at me. Because she was proud of her father, ***Sheikh Sayed***, she was proud of her mother, who struggled to remain the love. There was a stunned silence when she told me all of that. We are born as Muslims. We recite verses of the Glorious Qur'an. Besides, our parents teach us everything about the Islamic religion. This whole is so easy for us because we have no effort to become Muslims. On the contrary, Sheikh ***Sayed*** and his spouse struggled for

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of the Divine Islamic Law as revealed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Most of the Muslims, approximately 90%, follow the Sunni Fiqh. According to the Sunni Madhab, there are four Madhabs:

- Madhab of Imam **Abu Hanifah** (مذهب أبو حنيفة);
- Madhab of Imam **Malik** (مذهب مالك);
- Madhab of Imam **Ash-Shafi'i** (مذهب الشافعي);
- Madhab of Imam **Ahmad son of Hanbal** (مذهب أحمد بن حنبل).

their religious learning. Also, for remaining the love, so that was no easy at all.

That man had realised the meaning of the ultimate success, so he believed in it. An aim in life is the only fortune worth finding[1]. After that, a friend of mine, ***Duha***, wondered:

Can I be like the father of mine? Am I going to face life challenges like a father of mine? Or was he from a few people who saw the meaning of the ultimate success in life and the afterlife?

[1] Robert Louis Stevenson.

The Fourth Story

4

A Dark-skinned Young Man

SOMEBODY BELIEVES IN THE MEANING OF ONE NAME OF THE NAMES OF ALLAH ﷻ[1] AND STILL WISHES TO HAVE AN ADVANTAGE OF THIS MEANING DURING SOMEBODY'S LIFETIME.

BELIEF; HARD WORK; REACH THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS.

[1] Names of Allah ﷻ in Islam (Arabic: أسماء الله الحُسنى) (English: Beautiful Names of Allah): Allah is believed to have 99 Names, known as the 99 Names of Allah, pronounced in the Roman Transliteration *'Asmaa'u llahi Al-Husna*. Also, they are called *The Ninety-Nine Attributes of Allah*.

FINALLY, female companionship of mine and I had decided to go out for hiking. After a long-running debate, we chose a common caff located in our town. We accompanied our children with us. That day, our time was so much fun.

Out of the blue, a friend of mine waved at mine for seeing a dark-skinned, tall young man. Then, she asked me:

Do you know him?

I replied:

Wait! It seems of mine know him, or a suspect of mine see him before.

She said:

You, indeed, know him; he was a college fellow of us for years ago. He is the owner of the café that we are sitting in now!

I looked so wondered.

She said:

Do not be wondered! He is the owner of a restaurant located at the entrance to the town. Besides, a tower that is in sight of the Nile.

I replied:

Ma Shaa' Allah![1] *How did he get much money? He was not a rich one!*

She answered me:

[1] (Arabic: ما شاء الله). It is an Arabic and Egyptian expression of astonishment and admiration. The literal English translation of it: *As Allah wills*.

He, indeed, was a darling friend of mine. Do you forget that he is a son of aunty of mine? So, the knowledge of mine has a lot about his life.

I replied passionately:

O my God! Now, the attention of mine wants to know a lot about his life. What did happen when the father of his sweetheart refuses to marry his daughter?

She asked me:

Do you still remember his first love story?

I answered certainty:

Sure, I do remember. No one of our friends cannot forget his first love story.

She said:

I shall tell you what you want to know.

Then, she added:

After he had graduated from his faculty, he faced a severe shock when the father of his sweetheart refused to marry his daughter to him. That was because of the considerable gap between the two families at the societal level. After that, he became distressed and pale-faced. There was no connection between him and his friends or family members; the first wish did not get it. He laid a charge on himself that he would never think to marry her.

I said:

What a stubborn young man!

She continued:

Nevertheless, his stubbornness and determination were the motive to reach success. He insisted upon to obtain a visa for working out of Egypt. One day, I met him when I

was in the house of aunty of mine. I had a feeling of uncertainty about obtaining a work visa in Europe. He shocked me, saying:

He is Al-Jabbar[1].

I stunned silence and never asked about what he said. That day, he meant many secrets, but I did not see.

After months later, he, indeed, obtained a visa in Europe. So, mother of mine and I went to the house of aunty of mine to say goodbye to him. When he got closer, he repeated it:

Have I not told you that Allah is Al-Jabbar? Allah always treats all creatures with Kindness. I shall tell you what I mean. I believe

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[1] Al-Jabbar (Arabic: الجبَّار) (English: The Supreme Power): *The One Who Compel His Creatures to Do as He Wills*. It is one of the Ninety-Nine Names of Allah ﷻ. In the original text, *Al-Jabbar* means that Allah does a favour for somebody and treat with Kindness. The Arabic word *Al-Jabbar* contains the previous two meanings.

in the meaning of the Supreme Power that still does a favour for the whole beings. He is Allah, the Supreme Power.

A friend of mine said:

I, indeed, saw what he meant.

And then, **Ziyad** *travelled to Europe, but he had a little bit of money. The financial condition of* **Ziyad** *was poor. It was his first big crisis. At his earliest days, he telephoned his mother in tears, saying:*

I cannot sleep, O Mum! I live in a dirty room that does not correspond with anybody; I did not use it. You were taking care of mine, a bed of mine, food of mine, and a clean room of mine. I, indeed, know that I take responsibilities for me upon mine, but I need to speak to you.

She added:

Aunt of mine had asked him to come back to Egypt, but he refused. He emphasised that he would not be hopeless. ***Ziyad*** *believed in the meaning of Al-Jabbar, who does a favour for him.*

He, indeed, had started to struggle to find work. A few days later, he got a job in a restaurant. An old lady lived next-door neighbour. ***Ziyad*** *was saying hello*[1] *while going to his work. Besides, he was providing his assistance to her. That old lady had children, but they did not visit her at all. So, he was like her son.*

She used to find her care and sponsorship from him, so she asked him to marry her. She wanted to inherit after her death. Ziyad refused that. He emphasised that he would not abandon hers. Besides, he guided her to a great thing; it turned the life of hers to an entirely different path.

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[1] According to the greeting of Islam, the Muslims say: *As-Salaamu 'Alaikum Wa Rahmat ul-llahi Wa Barakatu*, which means in the English language: *Peace and Mercy of Allah may be upon you*, or *Peace be upon you*.

The friend of mine added:

Ziyad *had bought two-translated books: one of them was about the religion of Islam, and another was the Glorious Qur'an (translated into the language of hers). After that, he gifted them to hers. She, indeed, started to read. Every day, she summoned him to have dinner with her—a purpose of gathering to explain the problematic meaning. Sometimes, he told, sometimes he asked her to wait. He asked Sheikhs or Imams to explain what they did not know.*

Ziyad *amazed to know that the old lady converted into Islam. His amazement increased when he knew that she went to an Islamic Centre before him. He had great pleasure. The general conditions improved. After two years, he became the manager of a restaurant.*

You had the attention of mine, I said.

Day by day, his good relationship with his old lady neighbour increased. So, she suggested sharing to founded Eastern Foods'

Restaurant. He indicated that he would be the manager of it, and she would be the supervisor.

I said:

Ma Shaa' Allah! He is a well-mannered young man. He did not want to marry her, but he helped her for nothing. Besides, he did not look for her help, but he turned the life of hers to an entirely different path.

He did not exploit but gave the real meaning of life of hers. Besides, he made the intention of his for the sake of Allah ﷻ; Allah provided for him a quarter whence had no expectation.

The friend of mine stopped for a short time, then she spoke about a new relationship between ***Ziyad*** and the old lady:

Not only that, but they co-operated together to found a restaurant; that was the beginning. The old lady treated him as the son of hers, and she telephoned the mother of his, frequently. Nevertheless, it was not just for that, and she sent the papers that helped her to travel to Europe.

The aunt of mine, indeed, travelled to Europe. Then, she became the third party to found Eastern Foods' Restaurant. The knowledge of hers was the centre pillar for enhancing the quality of Eastern food. She added Eastern foods' flavours. Shortly after, they left the house of the old lady; then, they lived in a big house. He always used to say:

Allah is Al-Jabbar. Allah always does a favour for me and treats with Kindness.

I replied:

Sure, O friend of mine! Allah is the Supreme Power. Nevertheless, ***Ziyad*** *is in Egypt. What did happen?*

The friend of mine answered:

Everything flows, nothing stands still[1]*. Life never remains on the same path. Then, the old lady fell ill and passed away soon after.* ***Ziyad*** *and his mother did not hesitate about taking good care of the old lady. They suffered great grief because of the old lady's death.*

She also said:

Ziyad *amazed when he knew that the old lady had left a legal will. The legal will stipulated that the percentage of hers had to be half-and-half between* ***Ziyad*** *and his mother. Besides, it stipulated her money had the sons of hers—also, the portion of hers in the house. So, he had to search for the sons of hers.*

The old lady divided the inheritance of hers according to the Law of Islam (Fiqh). Nevertheless, her sons did not visit her or know about;

[1] Heraclitus of Ephesus, Greek Philosopher.

she left the money of hers to implement the Law of Islam. Besides, she gave one-third of the will of hers for ***Ziyad*** *and his mother.*

Ziyad *began to search for the old lady's sons to give the percentage of theirs. Also, he and his mother left the house, and they had an intention to search for a new flat for living in it. However, his mother refused.*

The friend of mine explained the reasons that made the aunt of hers refused to live in Europe. She also said:

The aunt of mine could no longer live in Europe; her living meant nothing. ***Ziyad*** *began to realise what his mother said. He took himself, saying:*

O my God! Am I abandon the lifelong ambition of mine?

Will I abandon what I reached?

O my God! You are Al-Jabbar! Guide me to the right path.

At that time, ***Ziyad*** got acquainted with an Arab and Muslim physician. She wore the Islamic Hijab[1]. The physician treated diabetes that his mother had. His heart began to feel the meaning of love again. She accepted his love; she was thrilled to his feeling.

His mother insisted on coming back to Egypt. Ziyad was not able to say anything, but he told his mother about his new love, and he looked for marriage.

He said:

What am I supposed to do?

He promised his mother to find the sons of the old lady. He wanted to hurry to give their legal money.

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[1] Hijab (Arabic: الحِجَاب) (English: She was veiled). Hijab is a Muslim woman's veil. A long dress prescribed for Muslim women to cover their whole body, except their hands and faces, according to the Sunni Madhab.

Surprisingly, I said:

Ma Shaa' Allah! He is a well-mannered young man; he fears Allah ﷻ. Besides, he searched for finding other people; he did not know anything about him!

The friend of mine said:

He, indeed, found them, and they agreed to give him the house in exchange for taking the whole money of the restaurant. All of them decided to do that. And then, he got married to a Muslim physician. They, indeed, lived at the house.

Well, his promise delivered. He took his mother back to the homeland, Egypt. After that, ***Ziyad*** *founded a café that we sat right here in now. Besides, he founded a restaurant located at the entrance to our town.*

I asked the friend of mine:

What about his spouse?

She replied:

She lives in Europe. He spends some months in Egypt, other months in Europe with his spouse.

He is kind-hearted. We always narrate his story to the members of our family. It does not bother him.

I emphasised:

He, indeed, was, O a friend of mine! At the beginning of his life, he did not exploit the old lady, but he helped her. Instead, she converted into Islam; also, he did not steal the old lady's money. He did his utmost to deliver the money to the sons of hers.

Lastly, she said:

Allah blesses him.

Lastly, I said:

*What an excellent young man **Ziyad** is! How good faith!*

The Fifth Story

5

Determination of

ʿAbdul-ʿAlim

When we genuinely believe that our Lord is the Sustainer, we will fear nothing at all.

Between the hand and the lip, the morsel may slip!

THE Mu'azzin called to the Dawn Prayer. Mr ***'Abdul-'Alim*** woke up to pray. As usual, he helped his spouse to wake up their children. After they woke up, they began to be ready to go to school or university. He had five children: four daughters and one son.

He adored his children, and his guidance was strict. Besides, he believed in some of traditional ethical values and principles, which many people considered it had disappeared.

His financial condition was not good, so his spouse decided to get a job out of Egypt. She decided to help her husband to improve their financial situation. Nevertheless, she shocked when she knew that the decision of the travel

commission told her that she would travel without her husband or the children of hers.

When Mr. ***‘Abdul- ‘Alim*** had known that, he went to the place of the company. He argued with the travel commission concerning his spouse and her travelling alone. He proved that a Muslim married woman was not permitted to travel alone, based on Islamic Law. And then, he offered them to abandon the contract of employment.

He spoke at some length; he expressed his confidence that Allah is the Sustainer. Between the hand and the lip, the morsel may slip! The commission retracted the decision. They did allow her husband and her children to travel with her exceptionally.

Mr. ***'Abdul-'Alim***, his spouse and children, indeed, travelled out of Egypt, which led to making others surprised; they wondered about him:

How did he convince the commission?

Nevertheless, they did not know that it was not just about travelling out of Egypt. Mr. ***'Abdul-'Alim*** believed in Allah, the Sustainer, so he clutched at the true meaning of (Allah is the Sustainer).

After four years later, from that time, they came back to Cairo. Mr ***'Abdul-'Alim*** did believe in his traditional ethical values and principles. He took a part of his salary to give alms to the poor and the needy. Also, some of his colleagues took a part of their wages to do that too. He used to do it nicely. He and his colleagues put that dedicated sum

of money inside many envelopes; then, they sent to the orphan families monthly.

Some of his colleagues criticised his behaviours. They said to him:

Why did not take a part of the salary for the exceptional circumstances?

His replying was convinced:

Allah says in the Glorious Qur’an:

﴾Allah’s is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. He createth what He will. And Allah is Able to do all things﴿ [Surat Al-Ma’idah: 17][1]. Also, Allah said:

﴾And bestow upon them of the wealth of Allah which He hath bestowed upon you﴿ [Surat An-Nour: 33][1].

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[1] The Meaning of the Glorious Qur’an, Translated into the English Language, By Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

Did Mr. 'Abdul-'Alim realise the meaning of the ultimate success? Did he believe in it? Of course! He did choose that path; then, he committed his family to have ethical traditional values and principles with great reverence.

He did believe in his values. It led to disagreement with the current Egyptian traditions regarding marriage. Most of the Egyptian people do rave weddings. Nevertheless, he never did that at all while his daughters' weddings. Their wedding ceremonies were held as reported in the Islamic Law; only the marriage banquets were held. Besides, he did not like to commit the sons-in-law to give an expensive dower to his daughters. See! The Messenger of Allah Muhammad, *peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*, said to a man:

«*Marry! Even with (a dower equal to) an iron ring*»[2].

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[1] The last reference.
[2] Reference:

Then, he talked to the son-in-law, saying:

I do not commit yourself too much to bear, so save the rave wedding's money to the life of yourself. Because of borrow makes sorrow. You know what you need and do not need it. A fool and his money are soon parted. For mine, I had brought up the daughters of mine a good bringing up and educated them a good education. On contrary to what the people do, I do not agree with they do.

We are just here to find the straight path to establish the life of yourself that based on the healthy spiritual pledge. The daughter of mine is not for either selling or buying; she is not goods. We never come to the negotiating table for that.

Many people underestimated his sayings and his values! They thought that his thoughts had gone too far.

Sahih Al-Bukhari, the Book of Marriage, the Chapter: To Give A Dower in the Form of Material Things.

Besides, they predicted that his daughters would delay in their marriage, so they always told him:

Do not push your luck![1]

They thought that Mr. ʻAbdul-ʻAlim took foolish risks in his life.

NEVERTHELESS, IF SOMEONE BELIEVES IN SOMETHING, THEN CLUTCHES ON IT, THE SHORTEST WAY AROUND THE MOST EXTENDED WAY HOME.

On the contrary, Mr. ***ʻAbdul-ʻAlim's*** daughters were married in the same way as their elder sister's marriage.

His son had married according to the traditional ethical values. Nonetheless, he did not get the marriage cost from his father, so they married in the same principle.

[1] It is an English common proverb. Said to someone who takes foolish risks, or does something that can only succeed if his good luck continues. It is equal to an Egyptian common proverb, which is pronounced:
miʃ kull mar-ra tislam ig-gar-ra (Arabic: مش كل مرَّة تِسلَم الجَرَّة).

Two years later, at that time, he felt ill, then he passed away. His illness was short-lived. Allah ﷻ did not want him to pay much of treatment expenses.

His death was deeply mourned. All people felt sadness and sorrow, whether they agreed with his thoughts or not. For his son and daughters, patience was the best remedy. As regards the orphan families, they felt more grief, because they lost their envelopes that they get used to it monthly.

See! The Almighty Lord says in the Glorious Qur’an:

﴿*And (Allah) will provide for him from (a quarter) whence he hath no expectation. And whosoever putteth his trust in Allah, He will suffice him. Lo! Allah bringeth His command to pass. Allah hath set a measure for all things*﴾ [Surat At-Talaaq: 3][1].

[1] The Meaning of the Glorious Qur’an, Translated into the English Language, By Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

Mr. ***'Abdul-'Alim*** reminds me of a great saying:

If one dies, death makes great men immortal. On the contrary, if one dies, he dies like a beast who has done no right while he lived.
The Mercy of Allah may be upon him!

The Sixth Story

6

What was the secret of his suicide?

Perhaps someone lives for a long time,

Perhaps you do not realise what a path you have,

Nevertheless, you, indeed, go astray.

THOSE were good days in the past, I do remember, when I was a university student, I knew that a student young man had chosen the path of Satan and followed his treason. He was an alcoholic, a chronic gambler, womaniser, and a lout. His name was ***Tamer***.

If the people mentioned ***Tamer's*** name, they got to loathe him, so the people always thought that he was a young man who consisted of sins, drugs, and all the treason of Satan. He had a bad reputation.

After the death of his friend, no one had any idea about him. It was said that his friend passed away in a tragic accident. ***Tamer*** vanished without a trace for long years. Several years after, I saw him in our neighbourhood. I saw another young man different to the last time. His facial

features disappeared, and his clothes looked like Sheikhs' clothes! Besides, he wore a white Jalabiyah[1], had a well-arranged long beard, and had a bright-faced.

In the beginning, most of the people mocked at him; they thought that was just external change. Nevertheless, I felt that ***Tamer's*** manners had changed for the better. I felt that it depends on the good deeds that mine and the people of our neighbourhood saw it. Also, he helped many the poor and the needy, in the best way possible.

Now, I see the prospects that make you feel monotony and boredom. However, the events of the story did not agree with our expectations, as usual.

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[1] The Jalabiyah (Arabic: جلَّابية) is a traditional Egyptian garment native to the Nile Valley.

One day, suicide shocked the people of the neighbourhood that someone passed away. Someone killed himself by throwing himself off the top of a building. ***Tamer's*** blood filled the land. Everybody stunned when they saw the blood. All the people were terrified.

I had been crying too much for days until a question came to mind of mine. That question kept coming back to the memory of mine all the time:

What was the secret of his suicide? How did he do after he reached the straight path? Why did he choose a dark result? A missing link must be lost. I was sure that a specific thing that led to his suicide.

Not for curiosity, but for seeing, I played the confidential informant to answer the question of mine. I began to ask his friends and his relatives:

What was the secret of his suicide on your mind?

What was the secret of his suicide?

Someone of his friends answered the question of mine, saying:

Tamer was suffering from a financial crisis, primarily when he begat children. He was not able to meet the needs of his family. The foreknowledge of mine did not support what his friend said at all.

It was not that, because his spouse was working with him in the same field; his spouse did not complain from any financial crisis before that.

Someone of his neighbours answered the question of mine, saying:

Tamer was arrested a lot. Perhaps it was a result of his political ideology. She thought that he had many drugs; it led him to hallucinate and then suicide.

I did not think so. Because if you know the straight path, prayer, and the fear of Allah, you never go astray.

One of his fellows at his workplace said to me:

Tamer always was alone; he did love the isolation and a little speech. It was said that he had psychotherapy.

For mine, I stopped searching about the secret of his suicide; I felt boredom. It seemed that each one created an answer according to one's point of view. Besides, I, indeed, went astray from the fact that I wanted it. So, I kept silent and forgot too.

A few years later, from that time, I met one of his close friends suddenly. That a person was older than ***Tamer*** near ten years old, so he had more experience with life. When he started to talk about ***Tamer's*** life, I did listen to him without distraction.

What was the secret of his suicide?

He told me chapter and verse[1] of the life of ***Tamer***. At the end of the conversation, I asked him:

What was the secret of his suicide on your mind?

He said an answer that I did not prospect at all:

Tamer *lived as a follower all the time!*

I said:

Follower! How?

He said:

Sure! He was a follower of a lout company that corrupted his good manners. He chose the path of Satan and its treason, so he did not realise what he did. Then, when one of his friends passed away, he became a follower for the right path. He understood the meaning of the

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[1] Chapter and verse. It is an English common proverb refers to complete details of someone or something. It is equal to an Egyptian common proverb, which is pronounced:
Min taʔtaʔ lisalaamu ʢaleeku (Arabic: مِن طأطأ لِسلامه عليكو).

ultimate success. All of that was so great. After that, he misunderstood the ultimate success's meaning. He did not be able to be justly balanced. So, he did not realise that Moderation is the centre of the Islamic religion. Moderation means no excess or negligence. So, he chose the right path with excess.

His mind and heart led him to accept anything without making sure of religious knowledge. Subsequently, he did not realise the meaning of the Moderation of the Islamic religion. See! Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an:

﴾Thus, We have appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be a witness against mankind, and that the Messenger may be a witness against you﴿ [Surat Al-Baqarah: 143][1]. Also, see the Islamic Tradition (Hadith) says:

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[1] The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an, Translated into the English Language, By Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

What was the secret of his suicide?

«*The religion (of Islam) is so easy, and whoever makes the religion a rigour, it will overpower the man. So, follow a middle course (in worship); if you cannot do this, do something near to it and give glad tidings and seek help (of Allah) at morn and dusk and some part of the night*»[1].

The religion of Islam calls humankind to Moderation without excess or negligence.

Finally, I found the right answer. ***Tamer*** did not get the ultimate success; he did not determine his objective. Thus, he was lost.

What I want to say:

Do not praise the beginning until you see the end. Besides, do not take a book by the cover. Perhaps Tamer

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[1] Sahih Al-Bukhari, the Book of Belief, the Chapter: Religion Is Very Easy. Narrated Abu Huraiyrah.

was closer to Allah than you. He did not get the ultimate success, but perhaps his good deeds would intercede for him.

The Mercy of Allah may be upon him!

What was the secret of his suicide?

The Seventh Story

7

Darling Children

of mine!

Life may force us to make hard decisions; the unexpected always happens.
Then, we praise our Lord that He guided us to make it.

DURING the late 1970s, there was an engineer; his name was ***Ahmad***. He was working as a Petroleum engineer in the Arab Gulf. Many people looked at him with envy.

On every summer holiday, he was coming back to Cairo to visit his family and relatives. Many of his relatives were accelerating to visit him because of his wealth. The mother of mine and I were doing it too.

All of us had shocked when ***Ahmad's*** spouse passed away. She passed away at a young age after suddenly, she had gotten a disease; she did not exceed the age of forty years. It seemed that envy was playing an essential role in his life, but no flying from fate.

She passed away and left five children. The oldest one was the eleventh years old. After that, all his relatives and friends came to express their sympathy to him and his children. It was a tragic moment for him and his children. And then, friends and relatives left them, and sorrow became with the children of Eng. ***Ahmad***.

His daughter was the youngest child, and she was crawling on the land at that time. So, it was easy to marry a widowed or a divorced lady to help him to bring up his children. However, he did not that. Instead, he told his children that he would leave his job in the Arab Gulf for taking them care.

Consequently, he deposited his wealth in a bank to spend from its gain. It was not an easy decision, because he was a young man, loves his job, but he forced to choose

between his career and his children. So, if he decided to continue to work, they would be under the care of his relatives. He did not want to do that, so he decided to still be with them for taking responsibility.

His second choice was a difficult one. He, indeed, decided to live with his children instead of their mother, especially he was ready to do his best and spend on the children until they would finish their Education. After that, he resigned as a Petroleum engineer, then came back to Cairo.

After his coming back, he summoned his children to a meeting. Each one of them would take responsibility. Their responsibilities were not tricky; their father undertook the major. He was a great man.

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE TO A WILLING HEART.

The eldest daughter and the second son joined to faculty of Medicine. The third and the fourth sons joined to faculty of Pharmacy.

However, surprisingly, the father faced what the third and the fourth sons decided. They decided to leave Pharmacy study for travelling to the United States of America. At that time, the hopes of many young people were about moving to the United States of America. Their father felt that they would choose another path that was different from the way he had hoped.

A controversy had begun between the father and them about travelling to the USA. He wanted to complete their Pharmacy study; nevertheless, their determination was strong. He could not be an obstacle to what they wanted. Eng. ***Ahmad***, their father, agreed to travel, but only if they

deferred their study at the faculty of Pharmacy. The father did not trust in their achievement of what they wanted. They felt happy because their father had seen their objectives. He must have seen their goals.

On his relatives' side, they thought that he would object to travelling; he had suffered a lot for his children, not only that but had played the role of motherhood too.

MAY HIS SEEING OF THEIR AMBITIONS WAS A SECRET OF THEIR SUCCESS.

The elder son became a well-known surgeon, and the second daughter became a university professor. Not only that, but the third and fourth sons still lived in the USA; they still live in luxurious life and comfortable as well. For the youngest daughter, she became a physician, then got married. She gave birth to three kids.

This story shows that no sweet without sweat. I mean that Eng. ***Ahmad*** wanted to have the ultimate success, so he worked hard and made his best. He still clutched on the path of ultimate success until the last day of his life.

His children bore witness that their father fulfilled his message in life; besides, he protected them from the obstacles of life.

After he passed away, his sons, daughters, friends, and relatives expressed their sympathy. He passed away, but the truth remains; the people used to tell it:

DETERMINATION OF ENG. AHMAD WAS THE PATH OF THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS. THERE IS NO SUCCESS WITHOUT HARDSHIP.

The Eighth Story

8

Life of Zuhrah

A beard does not constitute the philosopher[1].
Some people judge a female by appearance.

[1] English proverb.

ONCE upon a time, a subject supervisor had sent an official letter of secondment to another school. I, indeed, went to be on a secondment instead of another teacher.

At that school, I knew ***Zuhrah***; she was the owner of delight and happiness. That was what her colleagues called her. I looked at her with great pleasure. I was so happy that she had a sense of humour and a witty speaker. I noticed that all of her colleagues loved her and appreciated it. In the depth of the mind of mine, I thought that she got a good life. Hope springs eternal in the human breast[1].

On the first day, I began to talk to her. During the talking of mine to her, I did see the meaning of

WHAT COMES FROM HEART, GOES TO THE HEART[2].

[1] Alexander Pop, An Essay on Man.
[2] Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

We did much talking and many conversations during those three days.

Zuhrah began to talk with me about her life. I did listen to her without distraction. She told me that she had completed her university study with distinction. She was a young woman like any other, got married to someone.

Someone! Sure, I cannot mention his name because he does not qualify as a man. He left his spouse, ***Zuhrah***, while she was pregnant. Now, their son is 17 years old. Their marriage continued for only two years. Someone[1] left her without a divorce; he got married to a younger girl from his students. He adored her; so, he became too busy to take care of ***Zuhrah***. So, she did not have anything, but only she went to her father's house.

[1] It refers to Zuhrah's husband. The author refuses to mention his name; he does not qualify as a man.

He did not get enough to marry a teenage girl, but he refused to give the legal rights of ***Zuhrah*** and his son. It is a primary issue in the Egyptian Family Courts. Nevertheless, she decided to choose another way to get her legal rights after her lawyer cheated her. Her husband could steal her powers through her cheating lawyer.

Zuhrah did believe in the saying:

RIGHTS ARE NEVER GRANTED BUT TAKEN BY FORCE.

So, she decided to study the faculty of Law. The study of Law was her way to know how she would get her legal rights. She, indeed, joined the faculty of Law. And after four years, she graduated with distinction; she got (B+), so that was the first benefit in her life. Not only she did that, but she

decided to be the lawyer of herself. Sure! She stood in law courts for getting her legal rights.

The Lord, Almighty Allah, did not abandon her. She trusted in the Lord, struggled, and continued in her path without upset. So, it was easy to get her legal rights. Her overcoming was at the top of what she reached it. It was not the end of the path, but it was the beginning of the way of the ultimate success, which she decided to choose it.

Giving, it was one of the main feelings that the Lord bestowed upon her. The sense of giving was motivated by supporting everyone around her; then, they would enjoy a decent life. So, ***Zuhrah*** studied the science of Human Development intensely. Later she became a leader of Motivation.

Life of ***Zuhrah*** was not easy, but it had many hard times. As well as some of the people made fun of her. However, she did not take care of them; she was the envy of many of her friends. Her life was full of successes. Besides, she worked hard to build up everything she had: a smart lawyer and a leader of Motivation at the same time.

It is my pleasure to watch her on a television programme or listen to her on a chat show. I am proud that Zuhrah is a dear friend of mine.

The Ninth Story

9

Mother of Mine

Narrate Something

WHOEVER HAS TAUGHT ME ONE LETTER HAS MADE ME HIS SLAVE[1].

---

[1] Idris Shah.

EACH Friday, I visit the mother of mine; *the Blessings of Allah may be upon her.*

Once upon a time, we talked about Education and its problems as well as the status of teachers.

I said:

The status of a teacher is not as it was before.

My mother nodded approval, saying:

Whoever has taught me one letter made me his slave. ***Ghanem*** *said.*

I asked her:

Who is ***Ghanem****, my mother?*

She answered:

Ghanem *was a poor child; he brought up in a low-income family. His family was illiterate. Besides, the children of his family were day-labourers, working as farmers. While he was six years old, he looked at the pupils during their going to school. He wished to be a pupil like them, have a bag on his back, and write what they learnt. But his father had no enough money to buy a satchel. That was the fact in the 1950s.*

Ghanem confined himself to looking at the pupils painfully, shedding his tears, and saying:

Why can I not have a satchel like pupils?

His father answered him painfully:

I have no money to buy it. I cannot help you, my son!

Ghanem asked:

But why, father?

Father:

I am a poor man.

Ghanem asked:

Why are you a poor man?

Father:

It is the fate of Allah ﷻ.

Ghanem asked:

Why are can we not change the fate of Allah ﷻ?

Father:

It is Haram[1].

YEARS PASSED,

[1] Haram (Arabic: حرام) is an Arabic term meaning *Forbidden*.

But ***Ghanem*** did not forget his ambitions for Education. When he was fifteen years old, he still asked his father the same question:

Why are you a poor man?

Father told him that his seventh sons were in urgent need of money to buy clothes and food, so he could not meet ***Ghanem's*** wishes.

Ghanem, the ambitious boy, asked his father to give him a chance. Father asked him:

What would you do?

Ghanem said:

I would go to Shikha **Salma** *for teaching me how to recite the Glorious Qur'an.*

Father asked:

How do you get the money?

Ghanem answered:

I would ask her to teach me in exchange for being a servant.

Father asked with a sense of wonder:

Would she agree?

Ghanem:

Maybe she agrees.

Father said:

May God help you, my son.

The ambitious boy, indeed, went to Shikha ***Salma*** to teach him how to recite the Glorious Qur’an, besides literacy. ***Ghanem*** felt the joy of his heart when he took a board from his teacher, Shikha ***Salma***. He began to write

the verses of the Qur'an. He did not feel sorry for being a servant to her.

What a surprise! He completed the reading of the Glorious Qur'an, as well as learnt writing and reading. And because his age was eighteen years old, he could not join the school, but through home-schooling. Ghanem proved himself when he remembered: (**The more I learn, the more I realise, how much I do not know**)[1].

And then, he, indeed, joined *the University of Al-Azhar*. He was an extraordinary student among his fellow students. Later, he graduated valedictorian from *the University of Al-Azhar*. The journey of his life began with a fresh spirit. He acceded to the field of Education. Not only was it, but he

[1] Albert Einstein.

travelled on a mission out of Egypt to deliver the message of knowledge and the message of Islamic Daʿwah (Call).

YEARS PASSED,

Ghanem settled down in Egypt, then sent much money to his father to be able to educate his siblings, as well as buy a new house. Also, he bought farmland to be owned by his father.

He did not forget Shikha ***Salma*** at all. When he knew that she had gotten older, he went to her house to take care of her. That pious young man, ***Ghanem***, covered her treatment when she felt ill. He always repeated:

WHOEVER HAS TAUGHT ME ONE LETTER HAS MADE ME HIS SLAVE.

It is an old expression, but he believed in it, and still did the meaning of it.

Once upon a time, he visited her, then made breakfast for Shikha ***Salma***. After that, she took Medicine. It was only a few seconds; she passed away immediately. It was a tragic moment for ***Ghanem***; he loved her so much.

THE MERCY OF ALLAH MAY BE UPON SHIKHA SALMA.

Ghanem did follow his wishes and did make his ambitions come true. He believed in the saying:

(**Great hopes make great men**)[1].

Recite this Qur'anic verses:

﴿*Read: In the name of thy Lord Who createeth* ۝ *Createth man from a clot* ۝ *Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous* ۝ *Who teacheth by the pen* ۝ *Teacheth man that which he knew not* ۝﴾ [Surat Al-'Alaaq: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5][2].

---

[1] Thomas Fuller.

[2] The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an, Translated into the English Language, By Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

The Mercy of Allah may be upon Ghanem, if he is still alive, or if he passed away.

The Tenth Story

10

What am I supposed to do?

Some of the Divine Messages, you receive,
But perhaps, you do not see the meaning of it.
So, treat it right.
Never take the Divine Messages for granted.

THIS story took place in the new region that we had settled down in it. Once upon a time, my neighbour told me a secret only after by my insistence to reveal it. Three years ago, from that time, he settled down in the region.

That neighbour of mine had three children. Every morning, he went to his job, and when he came back, he met the demands of his family; went to the superstore to buy the family's needs. One day, he saw his old lady neighbour was going away during his coming back to the flat. Lo! He, indeed, knew that she did not ever get out of her flat. He feared for her, so he followed her steps for checking on her.

He noticed that she got further away from the block of flats, which all of us were living in it. It caused much confusion. So, he checked on her; she was a too old lady to

walk alone. But he noticed something was wrong! She begged every passer-by. He said in an odd voice:

What a pity, what is wrong? I do not know why she does that! She lives in a good life, and her sons have prestigious jobs. So, why does she do that?

And he told me that he came back to his flat, saying in an odd voice:

What am I supposed to do? Am I supposed to tell her sons? Am I supposed to ignore that? Is what I will do cause a problem? I am, indeed, confused. Perhaps her sons make her live in an older people's home if I tell her sons.

She did not ever do that before. I am, indeed, confused. Whatever the reason, will I be able to solve this problem without reverting to her sons? I know that her sons are stern and fierce of heart. So, I will do it alone.

What am I supposed to do?

And then, he told me that he went to Psychiatrist him about the matter of that old lady. He was confused; because the Psychiatrist asked him some questions that he did not know it.

The Psychiatrist did not ever diagnose the kind of disease. He did not know some vital information that would help him with the matter of that old lady. But what he found that the old lady was ill as others. Then, he re-thought, saying in an odd voice:

Am I supposed to tell her sons? Or shall I be the helper to her?

He did not reach the right solution. The next morning, he went to his job, and during his coming back, he searched for the old lady. He did not find her, so he thanked Almighty Allah that she did not beg again. As usual, he went

over to the superstore to meet his family's demands. He told me:

I saw her in front of me walking down a semi-empty street, and then she began to beg passers-by! I felt sorry for her. This time, I decided to come to her. I asked:

What do you want, madam?

The old lady answered me:

I want five Pounds.

I asked her with a sense of wonder:

Why?

She said:

My house is so far, so I want five Pounds to take a taxi to my house.

He continued:

What am I supposed to do?

I moved almost to tears in front of her. Her flat was opposite mine. I was seeing her for three years during her drinking coffee, a classy way on a balcony. What is the reason that makes her in this kind of situation? I just remember the meaning of the verse of the Glorious Qur'an:

﴿*And Allah createth you, then causeth you to die, and among you is he who is brought back to the most abject stage of life, so that he knoweth nothing after (having had) knowledge. Lo! Allah is Knower, Powerful*﴾ [Surat An-Nahl: 70][1].

And the, he, indeed, gave her five Pounds. After that, she asked him:

Do you know my flat?

He answered:

---

[1] The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an, Translated into the English Language, By Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

Sure! I am one of your son's friends; I shall reach you to your flat.

After that, he said:

I did stretch out the hands of mine so that she clutches on to stand up. And then, the old lady smiled at me; she was like:

I need it for a long time. I need to be closer to someone.

It was not just talking, but it was an inner monologue full of passion.

The neighbour of mine said further:

I reached her to the flat and kept an eye on her from a balcony until checking on her. Finally, I had had a solution before I fell asleep. The answer was that I would look for her on the block of flats, then bring her back into her flat.

I, indeed, did the same as the first time: gave her five Pounds, stretched out the hands of mine so that she clutches on to stand up, and reached her to the flat. I remained like this for eight months. Besides, when I was on a holiday of mine, I checked on her. I went to the same place to do my mission.

One day, during the coming back of mine, I found crying out coming from the flat of the old lady. At that moment, I realised that she passed away. The spouse of mine and I expressed our sympathy to the old lady's family, after the 'Isha' Prayer. I, indeed, felt sadness and sorrow; she was a vital person in the daily life of mine.

During the coming back of mine from the job, I looked for her again! What a pity, I used to do that thing; I forgot that she passed away. I missed her so much. I missed something important in the daily life of mine!

On the same day, while the family of mine and I were having a launch, the spouse of mine told me that the old lady's sons found a box. There was much money inside it; the value of money was EGP 5. Her sons did not know why did she keep it. I stunned silence. The spouse of mine noticed that, so I told her what I was doing. She did not know that at all.

Subsequently, the neighbour of mine told me that he resumed his life routinely; he missed an important thing. It never crossed his mind that I would owe the old lady that favour. The Prophet ***Muhammad*** ﷺ said:

«*Whoever is not thankful to the people, then he is not thankful to Allah* [عَزَّ وَجَلَّ]»[1]. So, he told me that he still thanks Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ for that the old lady taught him the path of giving charity.

[1] Abu Daoud recorded from Abu Hurairah. Sunnan At-Tirmidhi.

What am I supposed to do?

Lo! Verily, Allah has brought the old lady to the neighbour of mine to have mercy on the poor. Besides, he believed in the quote:

(**Give and send, God will send**)[1].

It was the path of the ultimate success of the neighbour of mine: Give and send, God will send.

[1] Henry George Bohn.

The Eleventh Story

11

A Hard Decision

You do believe in the right thought, then try to implement it.

You probably will face great hindrances, but your belief protects you.

On the day of the ceremony in honour of outstanding students, the teaching staff, including I, went to the school playground to participate in it. 'Abdul-Rahman was one of the students honoured. I congratulated him, besides I asked to thank his mother, who had come with him.

Nevertheless, I shocked after he had told me that she was not his mother, saying:

She was not the mother of mine, Mrs!

I said:

Who did she be?

He answered:

She was my uncle's spouse.

I asked:

Where is your mother, ***'Abdul-Rahman****?*

He replied:

She was in there with the uncle of mine; he has a fever.

With a sense of wonder, I repeated what he had said:

She was in there with the uncle of mine; he has a fever!

Then, I stunned silence for a moment. I said:

I want to meet your mother, or your uncle's spouse tomorrow.

He asked:

Who one of them do you want?

I replied:

I want anyone from your family.

On that day, I kept thinking about ***'Abdul-Rahman***. Perhaps he said that by a stretch of the imagination. On the

day following, the madam, who was with him, came to meet me. I did welcome her, and then I said:

What is the tie of kinship between you and ***'Abdul-Rahman****?*

The madam asked anxiously:

why? What is wrong?

I said:

Please, madam, answer me.

She said:

I am his mother.

At that moment, I was too stunned to speak. With a sense of wonder, I asked:

Are you his mother?

She said more clearly:

I am his uncle's spouse.

I sighed deeply.

She noticed that then said:

I know that you are confused, Mrs, so I am going to tell you the truth.

I did listen to her without distraction. She began to tell me about her life and ***'Abdul-Rahman***:

I do not know where to begin. However, I had gotten married to Hesham for a love-marriage. It covered the love of lovers. **Sometimes, Santa cannot bring you what you ask for**[1]; I could not get pregnant. Hesham and I tried to

[1] English saying.

find a medical solution, but no way for that. So, we decided to surrender to the Fate of the Almighty God.

Since then, I decided to bring up the sons of my husband's brother. ***'Abdul-Rahman*** was the eldest one. I considered him as my real son. He was staying with me all day when his mother was busy. So, a love relationship grew up between him and me. He, indeed, considered me like a real mother; he had a sense of humour. While the night-time was falling, he went to fall asleep with his parents.

One day, while ***'Abdul-Rahman's*** father was riding a motorbike, a lorry hit him, so he passed away right. ***'Abdul-Rahman*** became an orphan boy. The husband of mine undertook to take care of sister-in-law and meet her demands and their children too. My husband's brother was younger than the husband of mine.

It is common knowledge that a man may marry sister-in-law, according to the rural custom. I did not ever object to do that; because I could not get pregnant. I, indeed, could not get pregnant.

I said:

Sorry to interrupt, please do not be sad.

She said:

I am not sad, but I am satisfied; because I asked him to marry the sister-in-law.

Then, I stunned silence for a moment. I said:

Did you ask him to marry the sister-in-law?

The madam answered:

Sure, I wanted to please him. I wanted to beget a son[1]. I asked the husband of mine for staying ***'Abdul-Rahman*** with me. Besides, he still could not leave me. Many people accused me of insanity, even the friends of mine accused me of being unsound.

There was no choice so far. I had to accept the fact because Allah ﷻ would grant another good. See! The Qur'anic verse says:

﴿*It may be that our Lord will give us better than this (in place) thereof. Lo! We beseech our Lord*﴾ [Surat Al-Qalam: 32][2].

Then the madam said:

---

[1] (*Especially the Rural and Upper Egypt customs*): Some of the Egyptian people still has a thought that a male must beget a son because a son is better than a girl. On the contrary, most of the Egyptian people has a thought that there is no difference between son and girl.

[2] The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an, Translated into the English Language, By Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

O, well. I trust in Almighty Allah ﷻ. I have no other choice.

I asked:

Why did you accept that? You are still a young lady, and you did not have to do that solution.

The madam replied:

As I said before, I love the husband of mine; he is a very mild-mannered man and gentle. Besides, he respects me deeply. I am pleased. Concerning childlessness, ***there is no rose without a thorn***[1].

The madam shed her tears. I tried to calm down and asked her to stop talking. Nevertheless, the madam continued, saying:

O, Dame! ***Affection blinds reason, and lovers are always mad***[1]. *The love of mine allowed me to ask him for marriage.*

---

[1] English idiom.

I said:

You are an exception, Umm ***'Abdul-Rahman***. Let me call you the mother of ***'Abdul-Rahman***, please. You are worth being her mother.

The madam thanked me, then she continued:

I, indeed, prompted him to marry the sister-in-law even though he refused in the beginning. But ***Hesham*** craved fatherhood like any man.

Later, he just agreed to the marriage as well as ***Hesham's*** parents' approval. Their approval was for two essential things. The first was ***Hesham*** would protect the rights sister-in-law and her children (according to the rural customs). The second was ***Hesham*** would beget a son.

[1] Publilius Syrus.
One cannot love and be wise.

They married. I took ***'Abdul-Rahman*** and his sisters to stay with me in the house of the family of mine.

I said:

Excuse me, dame, you are smart enough to do that. I look at your face; you are so beautiful and cute. So, I think that you are more beautiful than your husband's second spouse, are not you?

The madam smiled, and looked at me, saying:

Have not you ever heard of it before that?

I said:

O no! I just got burned.

The madam added:

It is love, darling! I am sure that he adores me. Also, I am sure that Almighty Allah loves me because He does grant me a real man rather than children. Allah ﷻ is the Justice.

Sure! He is the Justice. He is the Giver and the Withholder[1].

I strongly applauded. Then I said:

How wonderful your words! I would like to denounce how your husband married to another lady!

The madam expressed her sincere thanks for me, then said:

A week later, I did come back to mine. During that week, I faced plenty of blame from the family of mine. For the first time since I got married, I left mine for a whole week. The heart of mine sank when I was far from the husband of mind, ***Hesham***.

Also, I took ***'Abdul-Rahman*** and his sisters to stay with me. Although they and I had fun together, they went to

[1] Two of the Ninety-Nine Names or Attributes of Allah ﷻ. The Withholder does mean that He Who repels those things detrimental to His Creation.

their mother; she clutched her children tightly to her bosom. So, I shocked. ***Hesham*** did welcome me shyly without even looking at the eyes of mine. He was deeply ashamed of his behaviour towards me.

I shed tears, but he wiped out the tears of mine by his hands and gave me a big hug. I can remember the feeling madly jealous of his second spouse when he gave me a big hug.

I said with a sense of wonder:

Gosh, she is a brazen one. I said before that you are an exceptional one.

She continued:

Praise be to Allah ﷻ. I did trust Him ﷻ.

She did not talk to me that day - still, water runs deep[1]. But I am not that woman. ***Hesham*** divided the days of the week into two equal times, although she did dominate the share of mine[2]. One time, she claimed to feel ill. The second time, she claimed to need something necessary. So, I felt angry in silence. There was no time to blame the husband of mine. I was very bust educating the children, her children in real, but she never knows about their Education at all. They still under the care of mine.

It is the truth. To know the truth about everything, listen to drunkards, children, idiots, and women. **Children and fools cannot lie**[3]. For that, I turned a blind eye to what she did against me. Also, I did take care of her; women are

[1] English proverb.
[2] In accordance with the Law of Islam, a Muslim husband must deal equal between his spouses. Turn not altogether away from one, leaving her as in suspence.
[3] John Heywood.

great talkers. Just I still took care of the study of mine, because I am a postgraduate student. Besides, taking care of children.

One day,

During my coming downstairs, I heard that the second spouse of ***Hesham*** telephoned some lady. She told some lady that ***Hesham*** has courted her for having a romantic relationship. Also, she said to her that I am a prudish lady. The second spouse wanted to prove that she is a flirtatious lady[1]. I stunned silence.

Her words were harsh. For four hours, I forgot where I went! I was tired. I went walking until I got to another city. After that, I had a seat against the Nile in silence. I did not care about his new marriage, but I was afraid that the

[1] The nature of man tends to a flirtatious lady. On the contrary, he likes to marry a quite prudish lady.

feelings of mine hurt. The husband of mine loved me; I was his lover. O Lord, help me, and You are the owner of the life of mine. You are the Justice, O Lord.

A woman walked beside me. She was afraid that I would throw myself at the Nile. But she heard me during supplication of mine to Allah. She looked at me, then asked me if I needed something.

I said:

Do not worry, dame. I would not do anything illegal.

She patted gently on my shoulders, then said:

Calm down. Complete your sweet words of supplication—the Lord only All-Hearer.

I stayed there till about 2:00 A.M. after that, and I calmed down, but I could not walk. Then, I switched on the

mobile phone of mine: many messages and missed calls from my husband I found it. I telephoned ***Hesham*** to ask him to come to me because I could not walk.

He came alone. Then, I said:

Hesham!

He asked:

*Why did you do that, **Jihad**? I was distraught. You are my lover.*

I asked:

Am I as you say?

Hesham said:

Of course! You made me marry her even though my objection.

I said:

It does not hurt the feelings of mine, ***Hesham****.*

Hesham asked:

Why do you cry? Do you regret her decision?

I answered:

Of course not. Just a bit tired, that is all.

After that, I told him what I had heard from his second wife. He stunned silence. Signs of angry showed on his face. He just waved at a taxi to go home. When we reached the home, he shouted, saying:

Everybody wakes up!

They woke up. Then ***Hesham*** looked at his spouse in anger:

Listen to me.

Jihad is my sweetheart. She is the first spouse. So, I tried to be fair. She permitted me to marry the sister-in-law. Besides, she takes care of the children. All this for my happiness. Please, fear the Almighty Allah, and all of you must know that I love her.

So far, everything is fine.

Later, the second wife gave birth to a beautiful girl. ***Hesham*** named her (***Jihad***), which gave me great pleasure. Years passed, ***Jihad*** and ***'Abdul-Rahman*** became my children and lived with me.

YOU ARE RIGHT, O THE MOTHER OF CHILDREN. YOU CHOSE A VALUE OF SATISFACTION AND TRUSTED IN GOD. NOW, YOU ARE ON ONE OF THE PATHS OF THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS.

The Twelfth Story

12
Uncle Gamal: The Owner of the Bean's Cart

MANNERS AND MONEY MAKETH THE GENTLEMAN[1].

NO PAIN, NO GAIN.

[1] English proverb.

THE husband of mine surprised me when he had decided to go on a pleasure trip. **Half a loaf is better than none**[1]. Shortly after arriving in the café, he said:

Look at this older man who was sitting with his elegant spouse. Do you know him?

I nodded disapproval, saying:

No!

He said:

*He is uncle **Gamal**, the owner of the bean's cart.*

I repeated what he said with a sense of wonder:

---

[1] It is an English proverb means that it is better to take what one can get or accept what is offered, even if this is very little, than to risk having nothing at all. It is equal to an Egyptian common proverb, which is pronounced:

ʔil-li yiigi min-nu ʔahlla min-nu (Arabic: اللي يجي منه أحلى منه).

Uncle Gamal: The Owner of the Bean's Cart

*Uncle **Gamal**, the owner of the bean's cart!*

He said:

He was a simple employee. Every day, he got up early to go to his job. No pain, no gain: was his watchword. Even though his salary was little, he was the hardest-working man. For his spouse, she tried to help her husband to get money, but to no avail, due to the needs of their children increased.

For that, he resigned from his government job. In any case, there was no choice except to make a bean's cart. His wife surprised when he had resigned. Consequently, she decided to work with him, so she did not blame him at all. In the next step, he searched for a suitable place for implementing his new project. His spouse was staying up late for preparing the necessities of sandwiches.

Performing the Dawn Prayer was the beginning of uncle ***Gamal's*** day. And then, he supplicated the Almighty Lord to sustain to be able to pursue a legitimate livelihood. His spouse played her role to help him relocate the necessities of sandwiches to the bean cart. Over the years, uncle ***Gamal*** became a well-known one. Also, the status of his family improved profoundly. The husband of mine was seeing him in the Masjid mostly.

The husband of mine finished talking about uncle ***Gamal***. For me, I looked at his spouse to ponder her elegant, while she was looking at uncle ***Gamal*** with high esteem. On his side, he gave her a big hug to tell her something. Indeed, I felt as if they were still engaged; not thirty years passed about their marriage. They had a sense of humour, among themselves.

I wish the young people and I would get feelings of mutual respect and understanding, as well as to get the path of the ultimate success of uncle ***Gamal***.

The Thirteenth Story

13

Did I Get the Path of Ultimate Success?

Something was missing in twenty years. However, I got it by chance.

A LITTLE girl had grabbed a flower, then went on behind a beautiful butterfly for trying to hold it, but it ran off.

She looked at the sky for waving the butterfly. She thought that it would come back again.

SEVERAL YEARS PASSED,

That little girl wanted to hold the butterfly again. At that time, she was in the middle of her study of secondary school. She aspired to a famous TV presenter or an author. Not only that, but she did her best to achieve it. Later, she, indeed, fulfil her lifelong ambition; she joined the faculty of Media.

The first day of joining the faculty was unforgettable. On the first day of the university study, she was happy. So, she dressed in elegant clothes. After that, she had a sit on the

first bench. Due to her belly laugh, the university's photographer selected her to take a picture with the new students. It was during the welcoming party of the new students.

That girl was not from the governorate of Cairo but another province. So, she got distressed due to the fair distance from her house to the university. Because of that, her father decided that she would reside in the university town, and it was.

Day after day,

Her distress grew when she knew that some girls skulked at night secretly. Besides, they did not adhere to perform the Prayers. So, she failed to give them a piece of

advice. Sure! After she had begun to think for doing what they did, she ran off from the bad girls. **Fear leads wings**[1].

One day, during the delivery of a lecture, a lecturer pointed out that expatriate girls would feel a sense of unease about their presence in the faculty of Mass Media. Because university alumni could be a journalist, if a person has skills, it depends on talent.

The lecturer's words irritated her, especially she did not use to stay out of her father's house and her room. So, she had a great yearning to go back into her family, parents, and friends. She decided to transfer her papers for the faculty of Education; she joined the Department of English Language.

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[1] English proverb.

When her father knew that, he did not blame her, saying:

I like what you did because I miss you very much. Well, never mind. Just do your best.

FOUR YEARS PASSED,

She did not feel homesick for her friends, because she met most of them at the faculty of Education.

Lo! Verily, she loved her university study; she enjoyed an intimacy with her community.

Later, she graduated valedictorian from the faculty of Education, then joined the field of teaching. She became a teacher of the English language. She believed in the saying:

STAND UP FOR YOUR TEACHER AND REVERE HIM SUFFICIENTLY, HE COULD HAVE BEEN A MESSENGER[1].

[1] This is a very common and famous proverb. Arabic:
قم للمُعَلّمِ وَفِّهِ التبجيلا ... كاد المعَلّمُ أن يكونَ رسولا

So, she wanted to have a good effect on their pupils. For that, she took care of improving the delivery of information as well as Morales of the pupils. Besides, she taught them humanitarian aspects. For her teaching, she used to introduce a method different from the traditional.

On the contrary, the headteacher, as well as teachers, objected to her teaching method. She still believed that a teacher should have a guiding role for the pupil; she was determined to carry out her new thought, even though many teachers objected to the method.

TWENTY YEARS LATER,

During going to the centre of correction, she overlooked the car window, saying to herself:

Did you grab the butterfly, Soad?

Well! It was a girl-child who talked to me.

I felt that I had abundant feelings and words to write it. Then, I did laugh, asking mine:

Would I be able to do that after twenty years passed?

Why not? I would try to do that.

I did grab the pen of mine, not to correct the notebooks, to write what was on the mind; I began to express what was inside me. What a pleasure to do that!

While some people laughed at me, others encouraged me. I turned a blind eye to who laughed at me to write. It was led me to determine to clutch at the path of mine.

Something was missing in twenty years. However, I got it by chance.

Praise be to Allah ﷻ that He granted me a great thing like that.

So, if you see what I wrote, it means that I fulfil the ambition of mine.
It means that I got the path of ultimate success.

On the Straight Path

THESE were some of the real-life stories, which were about their different points of view of life. Some of them have believed in a tenet. Some of them have sought help in patience.

BUT ultimately, they have attained the pleasure of Allah ﷻ and the ultimate success, in life and the hereafter.

AFTER they had done their best and trusted Allah ﷻ, they satisfied with His Destiny.

Firstly, they went through two phases:

The first one, they faced a tough in the beginning as well as determination;

The second, they were pleased when they received the Godsend.

BUT,

Have you ever thought about these questions?

A. Do you get the path of ultimate success?

B. How do you know that you are on the straight path?

C. Are there signs show that you are on the straight path?

D. How can I be one of the people of ultimate success?

Let's answer these questions.

Before talking about the straight path, we must agree with the universal rule: **God has created us to worship Him** ﷻ. Recite the Qur'anic verse:

﴿*I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship me*﴾ [Surat Az-Zariyaat: 56].

Loathingly, some people may accept this universal rule, then say:

I am not an angel; I am only human. What is the real benefit of this?

The answer comes quickly:

Because of Almighty Allah ﷻ *loves us.*

Well! Allah, indeed, has made of service unto us whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; it is all from Him ﷿. Lo! Herein verily are portents for a people who reflect. All that before Almighty Allah ﷿ asks us to worship Him.

So, after thirteen years old, or more, a man is not obligated. Allah ﷿ leaves a child to enjoy the period of a beautiful childhood. And then, a child's parents begin to teach, step-by-step, a child how to practise the rites of Islam religion softly. It is a train, not an obligation. Some families misunderstand the meaning practice, then ask their children to practise the Islamic rituals toughly. Verily, Allah ﷿ gives a man several years for understanding how to worship Him according to the right understanding.

When Allah ﷻ has made compulsory for us regarding the Prayers, it was not for suffering from physical exhaustion, but to supplicate Him and ask what we wish. During standing up to pray, you do feel serenity away from the bustle of life. When you implore Allah, you must make sure that He is All-Hearing and will answer your supplication.

He says in the Qur'an:

﴿*And when My servants question thee concerning Me, then surely, I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he crieth unto Me. So, let them hear My Call, and let them trust in Me, in order that they may be led aright*﴾ [Surat Al-Baqarah: 186].

Besides, when you stand up to pray, the muscles of our bodies will activate. The activation process occurs in a few minutes without we feel that. When you bow down or

kneel, the liquid found in the backbone will be renewable. Therefore, you are the beneficiary.

Thus, the logical result tells us that Allah ﷻ loves us, and the primary purpose of our existence is to worship Him ﷻ. Our worship is in the interest of us, whatever on the level of spirit, soul, or body. It is the first step of the ultimate success. The next step is the objective of your daily life. Perhaps you live only to achieve the meaning of eating, drinking, and going to some places for strolling.

But what is your objective in the next years?

You become adept at planning for a summer resort.

Firstly, you begin to save money month-by-month;

Secondly, you book a room or a flat;

Thirdly, you save some money to transfer unto the place of a summer resort;

Lastly, you plan to have fun by buying some things.

All the above, I do not criticise it. The target of mine is this question:

Why do not you take care of your daily life?

Why do you not put your objectives into practice?

Well, it is okay to write down your objectives now.

I do remember that one of the friends of mine had hoped to join the faculty of Medicine. He asked Allah ﷻ a lot to join the faculty of Medicine; besides, he did his best. But he did not stop there. He wrote on the walls of his room: *the faculty of Medicine*.

And when I asked him:

Did what you did help you?

He answered:

Of course! Each time I got lazy and doodled, the eyes of mine looked at what I had written. So, I planned, which led to studying hard more than ever before.

THE OBJECTIVE IS NOT TO PAY LIP SERVICE, BUT IT CONTAINS THE KEYS TO THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS.

Why did ***Tamer*** suicide?

He did not have an objective to achieve it in his daily life. He was subordinate to the path of Satan and followed his treason. On the contrary, when he left those groups, he was subordinate to the religious extremist groups too. So, he did not believe in the saying of George Bernard Shaw: **Life is not about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.**

Whoso has an objective and struggles to achieve it, will get it. Let's recite the verse of the Glorious Qur'an:

﴿*It is a promise of Allah. Allah faileth not His promise, but most of mankind know not*﴾ [Surat Ar-Ruum: 6].

In this context, the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad ﷺ, said:

«*Indeed, Allah Most High says: I am as My slave thinks of Me, and I am with him when he calls upon Me*»[1].

PLEASE, HAVE GOOD THOUGHTS CONCERNING ALLAH ﷻ; I AM FOR YOU A SINCERE ADVISER.

Wish, do your best, and have good thoughts concerning Allah, and then get your objective.

Do not forget the determination because they are two sides of the same coin. But what the meaning of determination?

Determination is the resolve to reach your objectives as you want. Also, it makes you continue trying to do something even when this is difficult.

So, what can you do when facing difficulties?

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[1] Abu Hurairah narrated.
Sunnan Al-Tirmidhi, the Book of Zuhd, Chapter: What Has Been Related About Having Good Thoughts About Allah, Most High.

You give up! Blame on whoso puts one of the difficulties on the path of mine!

If you do that, you will lose your determination.

I still remember that ***Dr Ibrahim Al-Fiqi*** had narrated that a man had one son and one daughter. His wife passed away. A man took responsibility for bringing up his children.

One day, he got them the school, then went to his work. After a few hours, he saw the people of his town hurried to save their children. The school collapsed. A man ran to save his children buried under the rubble, saying:

O Allah, help me. I will never leave you, darling children of mine.

He, indeed, started to dig, but rescue workers got him away. The rescue team dug all night until they gave up hope. Nevertheless, a man continued to search from night to morning. While he was searching, a hand tried to hold him, so he shouted to bring the people to help him.

They, indeed, saved his children. He was thrilled. His son said:

I was sure that you would never leave me, dad.

THIS STORY contained the whole meaning of ultimate success.

Verily, a man determined his objectives in life and did his best to achieve. Besides, he did not forget his belief in trusting Allah, who would help him make it. Furthermore, when he had a problem, he did not lose his power and determination.

So, it would be best if you had:

1) Objective;
2) Determination;
3) Good Thoughts Concerning Allah.

Now, you are on the straight path of the ultimate success. Consequently, if you lose one of these keys, you will not be in the right way and remain on the side-lines of the path of the ultimate success.

Also, we must not forget what Allah says in His Book: ﴿*And whose doth good an atom's weight will see it then, and whose doth ill an atom's weight will see it then*﴾ [Surat Az-Zalzalah: 7, 8].

He, *Almighty Allah*, who has taught Adhan's text, so He who is the Knower and the Owner of the straight path of the ultimate success.

The Ultimate Success calls us to take us from the winners in Life and Hereafter.

When you plan to put your objectives in life, you must have the skill to achieve. Besides, you need to believe that you can do it. And you do not need to ask help from your family, friends, or anyone else. The reason behind this, other's support will never continue. Sometimes they may encourage you to achieve your objectives and sometimes depress you. So, create your motives from your soul's internal of the proviso that you have good thoughts concerning Allah ﷻ.

Now, implore Almighty Allah to know your objective that you live for it.

Do not forget to focus on your intention; it must be real, not toy with it; otherwise, Almighty Allah will guide you. Besides, He will create the motives in your inner. Do not have evil thoughts concerning yourself.

So, try to have no depression. And then, follow some steps to create your objective.

Firstly: Supplication

You should keep on supplication for finding the objects you want. Due to more supplication produces Divine Messages, which are Godsend for you. These Messages support you in finding your objective that has lost.

The Divine Messages' mission informs humans what a man should do, as well as shows the signs of the straight path for facing the difficulties. But supposing someone gives you a piece of advice, what will you do then? Sure, you will re-think what you do it.

So, what if the Lord sends a Divine Message for you? Sure, you will receive it quickly.

Each one of us receives a Divine Message in his life. Perhaps some people do realise, and then face themselves to

re-think what they do. Maybe others do not understand the meaning of the Divine Message. So, if you become to be able to realise your Divine Message, it means that Almighty Allah grants you a great favour.

Indeed, whatever it becomes apparent, it means that you will be able to understand the hidden meanings of it. Consequently, you will be able to achieve your objectives.

Secondly: Realism

It would be best if you learnt from your past to avoid your past mistakes. Maybe you need to get your priorities straight. Do not forget that what you could not do it in the past, you will be able to achieve it in the present and vice-versa.

Make your objective realistic to be able to achieve it. I would strongly advise you against making your goal unattainable or may be suspected to achieve it. This advice is to avoid getting depressed.

Thirdly: Gradualism

Gradualism is an essential thing. It would be best that you began the path of the ultimate success step-by-step. Begin with a small goal, then another big one to achieve what you wish according to real and practical steps. The aim of this is that you would be able to edit or change some things, which may quickly reach the ultimate success.

A journey of a thousand Chinese miles (li) starts beneath one's feet[1].

[1] Chinese proverb, by Lao Zi.

Fourthly: Inner Power

You should have an inner power, not like someone else. Because what you want will not be suitable for another person.

Fifthly: Control Your Objectives

So as not to lose your objectives, control it. Because of the long-term goal might get bored. So, do not tend to get tired so as not to continue hardly. It would be best if you divided your objective into several parties.

Make each part has time to achieve it. Then, give yourself a review and write down what you did complete it as well as what you did not reach it. Perhaps you need to change your path if you discover that.

Sixthly: Hopelessness

Do not give up! Hopelessness is the arch-enemy.

Hope for the best and prepare for the worst[1]. Remain optimistic, but make sure that you are mentally or physically prepared to cope with failure or disaster. Keep in mind the saying of ***Edward Howard***: (**The youngest of us cannot always escape—hoping, trusting, relying on the best, we should be prepared for the worst**).

Besides, you will face many difficulties, so keep on your determination to reach the goal. It is the middle of success. On the contrary, if you have hopelessness because you failed, it means that you are in the middle of the failure.

So, how can I practise to clutch at hope?

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[1] English proverb.

You can do this while facing the first difficulty of you. Write an encouraging small poster on the wall of your room or a piece of paper. I had a good experience concerning the hope.

When I start to be an author, many people made me feel worthless. Nevertheless, I wrote an encouraging small poster: (**I am a writer. I am a writer**). Then, I repeated. After that, I believed in the goals of mine. When the difficulties increased, I was repeating (I am a writer). Also, I was powered by the strength of the Lord because I trusted Him.

Keep in mind that the Lord, *Allah*, will not let you down if you have good intentions. Also, the Lord, Allah, ordered us to be patient. Recite the Qur'anic verse:

﴾*Seek help in patience and prayer, and truly it is hard save for the humble-minded*﴿ [Surat Al-Baqarah: 45].

The Messenger ***Muhammad*** ﷺ said: «*How wonderful is the case of a believer; it is good for him in everything, and this applies only to a believer. If prosperity attends him, he expresses gratitude to Allah, and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently, and that is better for him.*»[1].

The training of patience is produced by bringing up at a younger age. So, ***William Wordsworth*** said:

The child is the father of the man;

And I could wish my days to be.

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[1] Abu Yahya Suhaib, son of Sinan narrated.
Riyad As-Salihin, the Book of Miscellancy.

So, keep in mind that: (**If at first, you do not succeed, try, try, try again**)[1]. The past scholars and scientists had the patience to reach their goals in life, and the present they have too.

[1] A fantasy short story by Zen Cho.